

**Amendments to the claims:**

Claims 1 – 3: (canceled)

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the agent is brought in contact with the hair during or after exposure of the hair to chemical and/or physical noxae.

Claims 5 – 11: (canceled)

12. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the agent is a solution, emulsion, foam, cream or gel.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the agent is brought into contact with the hair at a temperature between 20 °C and 60 °C.

14. (withdrawn) Permanent wave agent containing

(A) natural zein and

(B) at least one hair keratin-reducing substance.

15. (withdrawn) Agent for oxidative treatment of hair containing

(A) natural zein and

(B) at least one oxidant.

16. (withdrawn) Agent according to Claim 15, characterized in that the oxidant is selected from among potassium bromate, sodium bromate, sodium perborate, dehydroascorbic acid, hydrogen peroxide and urea peroxide.

17. (withdrawn) Hair colorant containing

(A) natural zein and

(B) one or more oxidation dye precursors.

18. (currently amended) A method for improving the condition of hair with natural zein, comprising the following steps:

providing a cosmetic hair-treatment agent comprising ~~at least one cosmetic carrier~~ and from 0.01 to 10.0 percent by weight of said natural zein as an unhydrolyzed protein obtained from corn;

bringing the hair in contact with said cosmetic hair-treatment agent for a time sufficient for hardening, strengthening, restructuring, repairing or stabilizing or for increasing luster, volume, or combability of hair;

rinsing or washing said agent out with water or an aqueous agent.

19. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the time sufficient for hardening, strengthening, restructuring, repairing or stabilizing or for increasing the luster, volume or combability of the hair is from 1 to 60 minutes.